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ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. Extract of a Letter on Queensland and New Zealand, from THOMAS HOOD HOOD, F.R.G.S., Member of the Legislative Council of Queensland, to LORD ASHBURTON, President R.G.S.

I HAVE been travelling a good deal lately over the Australian and New Zealand Colonies, and have just returned from a trip with Sir Charles Nicholson to Port Denison, a new settlement we have established in latitude 20°, which will be the shipping port of a large district of tropical Queensland. We are using our best efforts to introduce coolies from India for the purpose of growing cotton, for which there can be no doubt that this colony is well adapted, so far as soil and climate are concerned.

I saw that at a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society a gentleman stated that it was very doubtful whether Queensland would produce good wool on account of the latitude. This is a great misapprehension: the value of that article exported last season from the colony was considerable, and in quality it is finer than that grown in the southern colonies. It is now proved that some of the finest pastoral districts lie to the north of the tropic of Capricorn, and before many years elapse it seems highly probable that from some harbour in the Gulf of Carpentaria will be shipped the produce of flocks depastured on Leichhardt's Plains of Promise. We hope shortly to know more of the geography and capabilities of these regions on the return of the various exploring expeditions now out, or about to start, more especially from the two fitted out by the colony of Victoria (with some assistance from Queensland), for the purpose of searching for Mr. Burke and his companions. It is very doubtful whether the ostensible object of the expeditions will be accomplished; several of the camels taken by the missing explorers have returned to the out stations of South Australia; and if his party have not perished, they are sure to reach some of the settlements belonging to Queensland before relief can be afforded them. The Colonial war steamer *Victoria* and a transport left Moreton Bay two days ago, with Mr. Landsborough, and a party of 6 men, with 25 horses, to be landed at the Albert River on the north coast, whence they will travel along the eastern borders of the desert country of the interior; another party, consisting of *Aboriginal* police, under the leadership of a very experienced bushman, Mr. Walker, starts from the settlement of Rockhampton on the FitzRoy River, and makes a course to meet Mr. Landsborough. Should it be found that a large extent of good country exists inland from the gulf, to the west of Gregory's and Leichhardt's tracks, stock will be driven out at once, and the foundation laid of a new colony; which, from its proximity to the populous countries of Asia, would possess great advantages, and rapidly progress, more especially if commenced as an Imperial one.

I may mention, knowing the interest you take in those matters, that I passed over lately in New Zealand extensive tracts of country in the southern portions of the Middle Island, which are likely to prove highly auriferous, from the geological indications. It is to be regretted should these gold-fields be developed and prove attractive at present; for the small population in the colony will be diverted from more legitimate occupations, and the healthy

tone which pervades the settlers of these provinces, and promised to make New Zealand the England of the southern hemisphere, will be changed to the feverish, discontented one which characterizes the population of a gold country.

It may be interesting to you to know that I discovered at the Antipodes the remains of what I deem to be a species of fossil lizard closely resembling the Plesiosaurus of the Lias. I have sent the fossils to Professor Owen. There is said to be a possibility that the British Museum may still be adorned by a Dinornis : the footsteps of a gigantic bird, it is stated, were seen by a surveyor's party ; they were 14 inches long, and 11 inches wide on the spread, and they had been impressed during the night over the tracks of the men made on the previous day. All the wingless birds existing in New Zealand are nocturnal in their habits, and the general impression from Maori tradition is, that the Moa was a gigantic Apteryx. The district is exceedingly rocky, and full of caves, in some of which it is just possible that a surviving individual may find its hiding places. Exertions are being made (the last steamer's mail brings us intelligence) to ascertain the truth of the report, and if correct, thoroughly to search the wild and unsettled districts where it is said to be. Certainly this will be a most interesting event to naturalists should the search prove successful. I must say I feel somewhat sanguine on the subject, as once, when in that part of the Middle Island, I heard of a very circumstantial account given by a man, who stated that he had seen a great bird go down into a rocky glen one morning at daybreak, but the story was not credited. The surveyor who now makes the statement is understood to be a man of character.

2. Report on the Natural Products and Capabilities of the Shiré and Lower Zambesi Valleys. By JOHN KIRK, Botanist to the Livingstone Expedition. Dated Senna, Dec. 28th, 1860.

I BEG to offer the following Report concerning the capabilities of the regions explored by the expedition under your command for the growth of such articles as are in demand in Europe :—

The countries examined have been those bordering the Zambesi from the east coast to Sesheke, a Makololo town, situated in the centre of the African continent; likewise the valley of a tributary river, the Shiré, from Lake Nyassa to its confluence with the Zambesi near Moramballa Hill. The highlands of the Batoka and Manganja countries have also been visited. The area thus included extends over 11° of longitude and 5° of latitude; the greatest height above the sea level being 8000 feet.

The Zambesi forms a large Delta, commencing 60 miles from its mouth; the coast for about 8 miles inland is muddy, wooded with mangrove, avicennia, and other trees peculiar to such places within the tropics; the remainder of the Delta consists of rich flat alluvial lands, intersected by many branches of the river. This great tract is covered almost exclusively with gigantic grasses, which keep down all other forms of vegetation, only borassus palms, with a few figs, acacias, or lignum vitae trees, being able to resist the fires which sweep over these plains during the dry season. The people at present inhabiting the Delta are for the most part fugitives; the slave trade and war have combined to desolate this rich country, which once produced corn, vegetables, and fruits in abundance. Near the coast cotton of an inch staple is found growing wild, having sprung up from seed accidentally scattered; this equals in value much of the Egyptian. Climate and soil are admirably suited, seeing that the plant succeeds so well without cultivation, surrounded by weeds. In the more inland districts it could not raise its head above the